**Problem Statement**

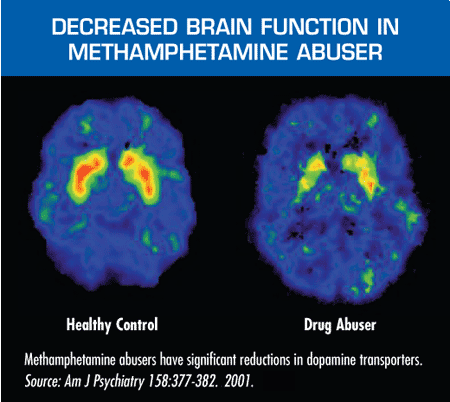
Recent research on sleep disorders has addressed issue of obesity being a large factor to induce sleeping disorders. With obesity being an obvious influence, I would like to take this opportunity to discuss how normal body masses can become affected with sleeping disorders as well.

**Lit Review**

Although obesity is a reasonable cause for some sleep disorders due to extra stressors on the internal organs, specifically the lungs, “normal” body masses are just as subject to have a sleep disorder. For example, one of the main symptoms of most sleep disorders are enlarged adenoids. While adenoids help fight off bacteria and fight infection, it is very easy for them to become enlarged producing high amounts of snoring (kidshealth.org) Inflamed adenoids are also highly likely to cause shortage of breath when asleep; this is known as sleep apnea.

**Causes**

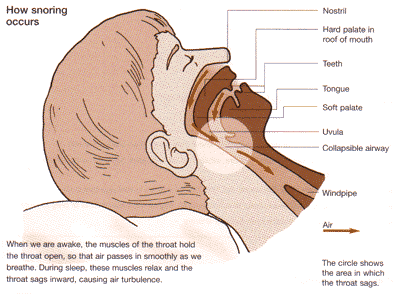
There are other main causes for sleep disorders as well. Stress is a high factor when one is trying to sleep. When the mind is too focused on a problem, this interrupts the minds sleeping patterns. Otherwise, instead of your brain telling you to fall asleep, it’s telling you to stay awake. This itself is very high in insomniacs; thus being why they cannot sleep. Another cause for sleep disorders is alcohol usage. Alcohol is considered a depressant because it slows the breathing, reaction time, and also relaxes the muscles (answers.yahoo.com). Many people who consume alcohol eventually fall asleep from it because of its effects. Now if a person were to abuse this substance, not only would they be considered an alcoholic they could develop insomnia due to the infrequent sleep patterns. If that person would pass out from a binging in the middle of the day, they would likely not be as tired when it comes to natural resting times. This would then confuse their biological clock. Along with alcohol, drugs can severely affect sleeping patterns. The three main types of illicit drugs I will refer to are stimulants, depressants, and opioids. Common stimulants include: amphetamines, cocaine, and crack ([www.ceida.net.au](http://www.ceida.net.au)); these drugs speed up the reaction time between the brain and nervous system. This can cause increased alertness making the body remain awake longer. However, when a person comes down from this high they will become extremely fatigued ([www.drugabuse.com](http://www.drugabuse.com)). Depressants include: marijuana, heroin, morphine, and inhalants. These drugs slow down the reaction time of the brain and nervous system causing slower communication, this will lead to an excess of sleep. While some depressants are used to cure insomnia, taking depressants out of context and abusing them will only lead to harm of the body. Opioids are another category of drugs that includes OxyContin and codeine. These drugs can cause severe and sometimes painful changes in sleep. A person who uses these drugs can develop “the shakes” ([www.addictionhelpcenter.com](http://www.addictionhelpcenter.com)). This is defined as a tensing of the muscles; with tremors a person cannot relax their muscles enough to sleep. Another effect of opioids is rapid heartbeat. Rapid heartbeats almost always correlate with anxiety and make it very hard for a person to calm down enough to fall asleep.



**Snoring**

Snoring is usually viewed as an annoyance, and while this is true it could mean a lot more. Snoring is caused by obstructions to the airways. Such obstructions can be caused by poor muscle tone in the tongue and throat. What this means is that the muscles can become too relaxed allowing them to fall back into the airway. Another cause can be a long soft palate. A long soft palate can swell the opening of the throat to the nose causing them to vibrate against each other producing snoring (www.webmd.com).

Routine snoring is a large indicator of sleep apnea (www.news-medical.net). From the above mentioned obstructions, the airways become blocked which leads to a holding of the breath followed by a gasping of air.



Sleep apnea can be a very dangerous disorder. It puts stress on the nervous system along with the brain and heart.

**Conclusion**

When looking at sleep disorders, there are many causes you can break it down to. Obesity is a major factor of sleep disorder because of the amount of stress it puts on an individual’s body. However, many other factors such as drugs, alcohol, and snoring all have an equal amount of severity when it comes to sleeping. The sleeping process is not one that we should take lightly. The human body requires sleep for rejuvenation; it helps brain growth and improves memory along with building energy for the next day. Sleep disorders interrupt this cycle making the body extremely unhealthy. If the body and mind does not shut down every night like intended, disorders are formed and sometimes leading to death. The average adult is said to need at least 8 hours of sleep to properly cycle through the stages of sleep. Just by making and maintaining a proper sleep schedule, one can exclusively increase their health status.

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